


NWS Form E-5 U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE MONTHLY REPORT OF RIVER AND FLOOD CONDITIONS	HYDROLOGIC SERVICE AREA: Pocatello, Idaho
	REPORT FOR: MONTH: September YEAR: 2005
TO: Hydrologic Operations Division, W/OH2 National Weather Service National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Silver Spring, Maryland 20910	SIGNATURE  Sherrie Hebert Service Hydrologist DATE: October 20, 2005
When no flooding occurs, include miscellaneous river conditions, such as significant rises, record low stages, ice conditions, snow cover, droughts and hydrologic products issued (NWS Instruction 10-924).	
<input type="checkbox"/>	An X in this box indicates that no flooding has occurred for the month within this hydrologic service area.

A severe thunderstorm dropped 1.01 inches of rain on Idaho Falls on September 21. The storm caused urban flooding of underpasses and some minor flash flooding. No injuries or property damage reported.

The 2005 Water Year Finally Brings Relief to Eastern Idaho's Drought Situation

Much of Idaho has been in a drought since 1999, especially Eastern Idaho. Nevertheless, the drought-ridden area did see some relief during the 2005 Water Year when Eastern Idaho finally tallied above normal precipitation for much of the region.

Referencing five of Eastern Idaho's Automated Surface Observing Systems (ASOS), the region was 107.1% of normal for the 2005 Water Year. A station summary graph is on the following page. The southern part of the region received the most precipitation with Burley topping the list at 134.5% of normal. Moving northwest, precipitation amounts decreased with Challis receiving the least at 88.8% of normal.

2005 Water Supply Forecast Summary

In recent years, water supply forecasts have been very bleak for Eastern Idaho. For example, streamflows in the Central Mountains were from 20 to 50% of normal in May 2004 and the Bear River Basin had an alarmingly low forecast value of only 4% for the same period. Fortunately, mid-winter snows and early spring rain and snow events, including record May precipitation, brought relief to many drought-stricken areas, which in turn greatly improved 2005 water supply forecasts. The Bear River Basin made a strong turn around, as its 2005 forecasts were the highest in the state at 110% of average for the May forecast and 130% for the June forecast. Forecast streamflows for the Central Mountains also improved, ranging from 60% to 115%.

Eastern Idaho Drought Update

The hills surrounding Pocatello revealed Eastern Idaho's improved drought conditions. For the first time in years, the hills still had an abundance of green vegetation in August; the result of normal to slightly above-normal precipitation amounts. Another indicator of improved drought conditions revealed itself in the "Drought Monitor".

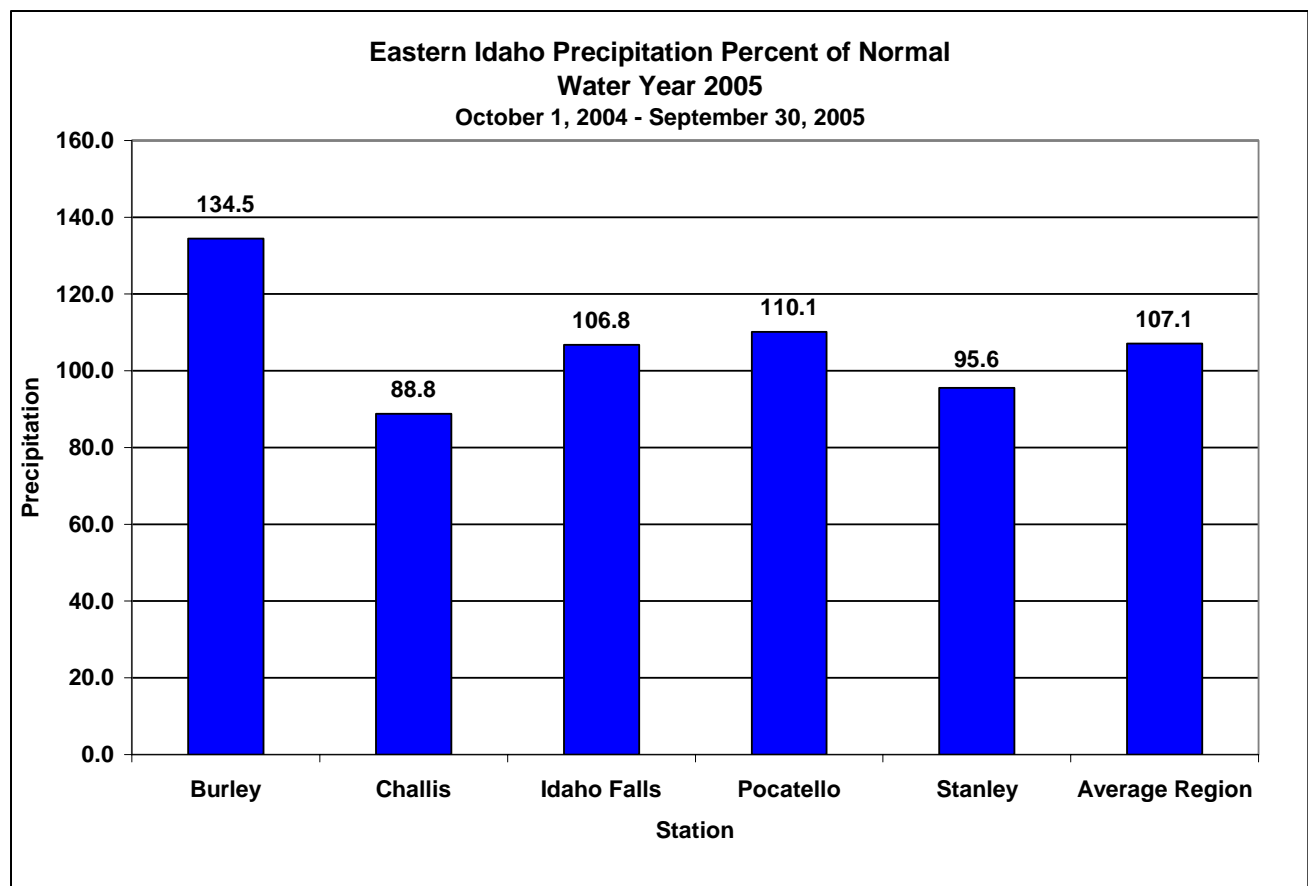
Eastern Idaho's 2005 Water Year began almost entirely in the "Extreme" and "Exceptional" Drought Monitor (DM) classifications, with thirteen Eastern Idaho counties declared as emergency drought declarations. The first county was declared on March 28 and the last on June 16.

These conditions remained through mid May, when significant changes occurred due to abundant spring precipitation. The severely needed precipitation ignited the region's first improvement since Spring 2003 to "Moderate" and "Severe" drought. Conditions have remained at that level through the summer. The primary factors holding local conditions at such "Moderate" and "Severe" levels are reservoir levels and soil moisture.

What is in Store for 2006?

Will the drought improve, worsen or remain the same? Climate Prediction Center forecasts anticipate temperatures to be above normal and precipitation to be in the normal range for the coming year through September 2006.

So, is the drought over? Eastern Idaho continues to live with a large precipitation deficit. Currently, the Pocatello Regional Airport precipitation deficit since 1999 is 18.56 inches. Considering chances of normal precipitation for the upcoming Water Year, the drought looks to be improving, but is not over. To recover from the drought, two to three well above normal winters are necessary to make up the large precipitation deficit that has developed over the past six years.



Other Hydrologic Interests

Precipitation

September precipitation for the Pocatello HSA was only 78.1% of normal for 41 of 43 reporting stations with climate data, according to Western Region Climate Center data. Of the reporting stations, 14 were above normal, and six stations were 25% or less of normal. Howe, Picabo and Stanley tied monthly record-low precipitation of 0.00 inches set in 1951, 1960 and 1987, respectively.

Reservoirs

The Upper Snake River reservoir system is at 27% of capacity¹, down 3% from September 14, 2005.

Reservoir	% Capacity August 31²	% Capacity September 30³	Percent Change	% of Average³	% of Last Year³
American Falls	21	10	-11	32	223
Bear Lake	M	25	n/a	37	504
Blackfoot	21	18	-3	32	480
Henry's Lake	92	91	-1	108	139
Island Park	42	37	-5	72	144
Little Wood	38	22	-16	102	209
Mackay	30	16	-14	94	2400
Magic	27	20	-7	63	392
Oakley	M	29	n/a	104	517
Palisades	51	40	-11	60	168
Ririe	70	63	-7	116	195
Lake Walcott	101 ⁴	43 ⁵	58	n/a	n/a

Source: (1) US Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), October 19, 2005; (2) NRCS, Augusts 31, 2005; (3) NRCS, September 30, 2005; (4) BOR, September 14, 2005; (5) BOR, October 19, 2005.

Hydrologic Product Summary

September 2005 Hydrologic Product Summary

Product	Number Issued
Flash Flood Warning	1
Flash Flood Statement	0
Flood Watch for Flash Flooding	0
Flood Warning	0
Flood Statement	0
Flood Watch for Flooding	0
Urban and/or Small Stream Flood Warning	1
Urban and/or Small Stream Flood Advisory	0
Hydrologic Outlook	0
Hydrologic Statement	0
NOW or Special Weather Statement (related to flooding)	2
Local Storm Report (related to flooding)	3

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